Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

JANUARY 2022

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
JAN. 12, 2022

At Chapter 1's seventh Zoom meeting, attendees included Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; Directors Bill Ellwood, logging in from Florida, and Dick Doyle; and Carl Baldwin taking part from New Mexico. President Andy Megrath attempted to log in, but we were unable to make an audio connection. For that reason, Tim presided.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

Dick Doyle reported that in the last two days he had lost two men he had served with in Vietnam.

The minutes of the November meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard Reed provided a partial treasurer's report, as the Heritage Family Credit Union had changed its website, making it a challenge to retrieve all the usual data. Nonetheless, the chapter has a total of $74,526 in cash on hand. Our credit card bill is paid up.

Richard is trying to get the purchase of break-open tickets "normalized" with the vendor, as the price has varied "pretty wildly" because of supply problems. "On the whole, we're still doing very well on our investment [in] the tickets," he said.

Tim Lonergan, a volunteer with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports, reported that the chapter's $2,000 donation, given to support the services of the group to veterans was "greatly appreciated." Through a fortunate coincidence, the check from the chapter came into Vermont Adaptive on Giving Tuesday, Nov. 30, which resulted in our gift being matched by other donors, for a total of $4,000. However, the organization's programs have been disrupted by COVID, including limits on close contact and loss of staffing at ski areas like Killington, and lack of snow. So far, he said, the skiing program of Vermont Adaptive has functioned at a reduced level. "One way or another we're going to make this thing work, and the donation is certainly appreciated," Tim said.

Tim reported that he had heard that a pending sale of the VFW building at 15 Wales St., where Chapter 1 has its office, had been canceled. Later in the day, on a phone call, Andy Megrath confirmed that was the case. Andy said the membership had voted down the sale. Thus the chapter's home at the VFW appears to be secure for now.

Richard Reed reported that "nothing substantive" came out of the Dec. 18 State Council meeting, other than the news from the VVA national group that a new president was elected and a vote passed to make VVA a "last person standing" organization.

Jack McManus is the newly elected President of the VVA national organization, replacing John Rowan. (Photo by Ken Williamson, courtesy of The VVA Veteran)

As reported in the November-December issue of The VVA Veteran, Jack McManus, the national VVA treasurer, running "from the floor," defeated eight-term national President John Rowan for VVA president.

"Finally," The VVA Veteran reported, "the Convention's 702 delegates, after years of often-heated debate, at 11:25 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 4, voted overwhelmingly and with virtually no debate to adopt a roadmap for VVA's future. The delegates, that is, voted to keep VVA operating the way it has since 1978 — as a veterans service organization with full membership open only to those who served on active duty in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.

"In doing so, the delegates shunted aside alternative proposals that would have opened membership to younger veterans or formed a successor organization to carry on VVA's legacy after the organization went out of business on a to-be-determined future date.

"The resolution the delegates approved, officially called Proposed Resolution 11, reads, in toto: 'Vietnam Veterans of America, its Officers and Board members [are] prohibited from changing the organization's name and/or creating any new veterans organization to replace our current one; thus making us a *last person standing organization*.'"

Bill Ellwood reported that information on chapter meetings is now available on our website under the Events section. Readers are directed to the Newsletters section to obtain the date, time and link to the next meeting. "Newsletters are up to date" on the website, Bill reported, as well as on the Rutland Historical Society website, rutlandhistory.com.

Bill said that when he returns from Florida in the spring, he'll be able to get more of our photos on the historical society's website. Bill noted recent work updating the chapter's website, vietnamvetschapter1.org. Jack and Bill invited members to check out the site and feel free to suggest changes or corrections. You can forward them to Bill at wellwood1950 AT gmail.com, Jack at jack_cr2 AT yahoo.com or Andy Megrath at vthogman AT comcast.net.

Jack made a few remarks about his report in the November newsletter, which included the national VVA election of McManus and the vote on Resolution 11, described above. While the news was dramatic, Jack said, it may not have been quite the upheaval it appeared to be. Jack thinks that coming issues of The VVA Veteran will spell out future direction of the national group. While the "last person standing" choice was the clear sentiment, Jack thought the likelihood was that VVA would collaborate down the road with other groups on veterans advocacy issues.

Richard Reed, picking up on the "last person standing" idea, suggested that, when the chapter ultimately disbands, something talked about but in no way scheduled, we might want to suggest to Tomasi's bar in Fair Haven a charity that would benefit from the sale of break-open tickets. Chapter 1 has enjoyed the revenue from sale of the tickets at Tomasi's for years and owes its healthy bank balance to that source. "They are dedicated to doing something for veterans, so that helps narrow the field a little bit," Richard noted. Richard said he would have "more detailed suggestions" in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, secretary

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, AT 5 P.M.

Topic: VVA Chapter 1 Meeting
Time: Mar 9, 2022 05:00 PM Eastern Time
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88922301700?pwd=OGNQMjVqRy8yc0ljendrdnBQUWN2Zz09

Meeting ID: 889 2230 1700
Passcode: 394850

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

APRIL 2022

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
APRIL 13, 2022

At Chapter 1's eighth Zoom meeting, attendees included Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Bill Ellwood and Carl Baldwin, who was taking part from New Mexico. Kerry O'Hara attempted to join the meeting, but was unable to do so for technical reasons. Sorry, Kerry, we'll hope to avoid that next time.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

No one had a flag handy for the pledge, but Bill Ellwood called up one on his phone and held it up for the others to see. So we all remotely pledged allegiance to a remote flag. That is presumably legal.

Jack Crowther relayed the sad news of the passing of Mary ("Sissy") Megrath, the wife of Chapter 1 President, Andy Megrath. Sissy died April 10 at the age of 70 after a battle with Parkinson's disease. We observed a period of silence in acknowledgment of her passing and Andy's loss.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported a balance of $76,699.73 in all of the chapter's accounts. Net income from the sale of break-open tickets for the current fiscal year, which began in March, is $3,683.

The report was approved unanimously.

This being our Annual Meeting, Jack Crowther made a motion to elect the following officers and board members: president, Andy Megrath; vice president, Tim Lonergan; treasurer, Richard Reed; secretary, Jack Crowther; and directors, Bill Ellwood, Dick Doyle, Carl Baldwin, Mike Murphy, and Cliff Adams. Seconded by Richard Reed.

There were no other nominations. Tim Lonergan called for a vote on the slate. The slate was elected unanimously.

In other business, Jack Crowther proposed a monthly donation to Ukranian relief, in light of the ongoing situation there. The chapter had donated $2,000 at our April meeting to the Save the Children Ukrainian relief effort. Jack proposed a $200 a month donation to the same charity.

Richard Reed suggested that the donation be reviewed in six months, which would be October. After some discussion, Jack proposed an ongoing donation to Save the Children, with a revisiting in October, of $200 per month. Seconded by Richard Reed. Jack noted that in reviewing the Save the Children web page, the

Ukraine fund allows for the use of donations in other locations. The web site states, “Help Children at Risk in Ukraine and Around the World with Immediate Aid,” allowing use of funds elsewhere.

As noted in the March meeting, Save the Children is rated four stars with the Charity Navigator charity-rating organization. It declares that 85 percent of its funds go to “programs,” 9 percent to fundraising, and 6 percent to “management and general.”

The motion was approved unanimously.

Bill Ellwood indicated that he will propose a new donation to the Rutland Historical Society, which has been very helpful in seeing that the Chapter 1 digital archive material, compiled by himself and Jack Crowther, be available on the society’s web page. The effort to transfer that material is ongoing, led by Bill and Jack.

Jack again reported on his efforts to track down a large photograph of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial to use as a thank-you gesture. Jack has located the photo and the photographer, Jerry LeBlond, who owns the rights to it. After some discussion, however, it was the consensus that an updated photo showing the replacement sculpture, installed in 2017 and portraying a soldier in Vietnam-era garb, would be more fitting at this stage. Jack will pursue that. With the Rutland Garden Club and the Rutland Recreation and Parks Department normally planting flowers and mulching the shrubs around the memorial in the spring, there should be an opportunity to take a current picture in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

THE CHAPTER 1 ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, AT 5 P.M.

Here’s the link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89491841432?pwd=eC9uWk9PNEpDN0xFKzR3ZXVBbzk4QT09
Meeting ID: 894 9184 1432
Passcode: 709318

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701

Address Service Requested

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

MAY 2022

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
MAY 11, 2022

At Chapter 1's ninth Zoom meeting, attendees included Andy Megrath, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; Directors Bill Ellwood and Michael Murphy; and Tom Whittaker from Brandon.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

Jack Crowther introduced Amber Goss, a vocational rehabilitation counselor from Rutland working out of the Department of Veterans Affairs in White River Junction. Her job is to determine services a vet may be entitled to when they have difficulty obtaining or keeping a job as a result of service-connected disabilities. She can then connect the vets with training and other services to get them into the job market.

Anyone who knows a vet who might need these services can contact Amber at 802-295-9363, ext. 4291, or email her at amber.gos@va.gov. Amber said she will be attending the Veterans Summit at Northern Vermont University on June 3 at the Lyndon campus in Lyndonville. The summit runs from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported a balance of $83,417.56 in all of the chapter's accounts. Net income from the sale of break-open tickets for the current fiscal year, which began in March, is $11,158. The report was approved unanimously.

Ronald Bean (left), raised in Rutland and now of Wells, is shown at the Marine Air Base in Chu Lai during his 1966-67 Vietnam tour. With him was Robert Bizon of Rutland. Robert died in April of 2015.

Ronald Bean of Wells has submitted his DD 214 for inclusion on the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. He entered the service from Rutland and spent 18 months at Chu Lai in 1966 and 1967. Adjacent is a picture he submitted in response to an invitation to local Vietnam vets to submit photos and accounts of their time in Vietnam. Photos and stories may be submitted to Bill Ellwood by emailing him at rutlandvvaarchivesATgmail.com.

As there are one or more other approved requests for inclusion on the Honor Roll, we agreed to update the plaque at the memorial, since it hasn't been updated since 2017. Jack Crowther will put out a press release inviting Honor Roll submissions. Those who wish to be included will need to submit a DD 214 military service record

showing service in the war and showing that they entered the service from Rutland County.

A question was raised about the policy of Chapter 1 to pay for life memberships for any member with a one- or three-year membership. The policy is still in effect for those who have a membership and would like it it be a life membership.

Bill Ellwood moved to make a $1,000 contribution to the Rutland Historical Society in recognition of their help in archiving Chapter 1's digital material. Many of the Chapter 1 records, including newsletters, photos, and news articles, are already accessible at the Historical Society's web site, rutlandhistory.com. Some of our material is stored at the much larger free site, archive.org, reachable via the Historical Society web site. Mike Murphy seconded Bill's motion, which passed unanimously.

In final notes, Andy Megrath reported that the state Department of Motor Vehicles is not keeping track of the deaths of vehicle owners with Vietnam veteran license plates. As a result, spouses or others are continuing to drive with the license plates, contrary to the intent of the legislation establishing the plates.Andy said he would bring the matter up at the next VVA State Council meeting in June.

Richard Reed said that the State Council meeting will be June 25 at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. It will be an in-person meeting beginning at 1 p.m. VVA members from around the state will gather earlier to cook hotdogs and hamburgers for the residents, then meet to carry out State Council business. Chapter 1 is entitled to three State Council member and we need two more to serve with Richard. Anyone interested can notify Andy Megrath (email: vthogmanATcomcast.net) and ask to be designated as a State Council rep for the chapter. Normally those meetings are held via Zoom, the June 25 meeting being an exception.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

AS IN THE PAST, CHAPTER 1 WILL NOT MEET DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS.
THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 14, AT 5 P.M.

Here's the link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84093329541?pwd=2_S1sUsj3sGQIA-GfZytgw5RHbftTw.1
Meeting ID: 840 9332 9541
Passcode: 360109

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701

Address Service Requested

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SEPTEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
SEPT. 14, 2022

At Chapter 1's 10th Zoom meeting, attendees included Tim Lonergan, vice president; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Bill Ellwood, Carl Baldwin and Michael Murphy.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the May meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard Reed had submitted by email his treasurer's report, showing a balance of $100,180.31 in all of the chapter's accounts. Net income from the sale of break-open tickets for the current fiscal year, which began in March, is $12,275. The report was approved unanimously.

As discussed at the May meeting, the chapter has requests for inclusion on the Honor Roll, supported by the necessary DD 214 verification of service in the Vietnam War. We plan to update the plaque on Veterans Day. The Honor Roll hasn't been updated since 2017.

Jack Crowther will put out a press release inviting Honor Roll submissions. Those who wish to be included will need to submit a DD 214 military service record showing service in the war and showing that they entered the service from Rutland County.

Bill Ellwood moved that Jack convey wording to him for a plaque for the West Rutland American Legion post. The post is providing a home for the bust from the original sculpture at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. Seconded by Carl Baldwin. Passed unanimously. The plaque will read as follows:

> **This marble bust is a portion of the original centerpiece of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. The late John Reno of Fair Haven, a Vietnam veteran and artist, began the sculpture as a tribute to fellow veterans but died in an accident in 1982 before completing it. West Rutland sculptor Don Ramey completed the carving, which was dedicated in 2000. The original sculpture, suffering from exposure to the elements, was recreated by Don Ramey and dedicated in 2017. Vietnam Veterans of**

America, Chapter 1, of Rutland donated this remnant of the original memorial to West Rutland American Legion Post 87 in 2020. It serves as a lasting tribute to the men and women from Rutland County who served in the Vietnam War (1955 — 1975).

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, OCT. 12, AT 5 P.M.

Here's the link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82952590935?pwd=cTZRelA1RnJ3bDFHMWhNd1FuQ3RlZz09

Meeting ID: 829 5259 0935

Passcode: 786355

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701

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OCTOBER 2022

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
OCT. 12, 2022

At Chapter 1's 11th Zoom meeting, attendees included Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Bill Ellwood, Carl Baldwin and Michael Murphy.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard reported a balance of $105,056.85 in all of the chapter's accounts. Net income from the sale of break-open tickets for the current fiscal year, which began in March, is $12,987. The report was approved unanimously.

Jack Crowther said plans are under way to update the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, a Friday, at 10 a.m. In connection with that, we will have a work party to spruce up the memorial on Monday, Nov. 7, at 10:30 a.m., weather permitting. If necessary we can postpone the work to a better day.

A preliminary check with President Andy Megrath indicated that there are several names to be added to the Honor Roll based on military records submitted. Jack and Tim posted flyers at several locations, including American Legion posts, the Rutland VFW, and elsewhere to invite Vietnam vets and family members to submit DD 214 records and have names added. The deadline for submitting paperwork is Oct. 15. The Rev. Pete Hults, Chapter 1 chaplain, has agreed to be on hand at the Nov. 11 ceremony to offer a prayer.

Bill Ellwood has been working on getting a plaque made for the bust from the original Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. The bust was salvaged from the original sculpture at the memorial when a new sculpture replaced it. The bust sits in the community hall of West Rutland American Legion Post 87. The plaque will give the history of the sculpture, which was completed by West Rutland artist Donald Ramey. It was begun by Vietnam vet John Reno of Fair Haven, who died before completing it.

Richard Reed moved to have Bill go ahead and get the plaque made. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously.

Jack Crowther reported that the chapter's $200 per month donation to Ukraine relief through the Save the Children fund was scheduled to end this month. Jack wondered if the chapter wanted to continue the donation. Richard Reed made a motion to continue the donation for another six months at the same level. Seconded by Bill Ellwood. Passed unanimously.

Jack also wondered if the chapter wished to offer assistance to Puerto Rico, which suffered terrific damage in Hurricane Fiona in September. Richard Reed commented: “I like the notion of seeing if we can do something for other vets and people in Puerto Rico, because, you know, they get short-changed on everything, and it’s going to take the fed awhile to get anything to them. Any little bit we can throw in there can only help.”

Andy Megrath had received a request for help from a VVA chapter in Puerto Rico, but the consensus seemed to be that we needed to do some investigation as to how the money would be spent. Tim Lonergan said he would pursue that with Andy so the chapter could be sure any donation was well used. Alternatively, Jack Crowther has looked into a charity called Direct Relief, which has a top rating by Charity Navigator. Direct Relief is able to channel contributions in specific directions, such as Hurricane Fiona assistance. By the November meeting we should have some clarity on how we might best help Puerto Rico.

Bill Ellwood renewed his request for chapter members and others from the area to supply pictures and stories of their service in Vietnam. Ronald Bean of Wells has supplied pictures of Chu Lai and Steve Lancour, a classmate of Bill’s, has given us a bio and pictures. John Brower of Rutland, a former medic, also supplied photos and a story that ran in a Rutland Regional Medical Center newsletter. Anyone willing to share stories and pictures for inclusion in chapter records should send them to Bill at rutlandvvaarchivesATgmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, NOV. 9, AT 5 P.M.

Here’s the link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85966615593?pwd=Sk5EbjNibzB6MGVUUlhENVVGa1ZLUT09

Meeting ID: 859 6661 5593

Passcode: 595142

Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

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NOVEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING
NOV. 9, 2022

At Chapter 1's Zoom meeting, attendees included Andy Megrath, president; Tim Lonergan, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Directors Bill Ellwood, and Michael Murphy.

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

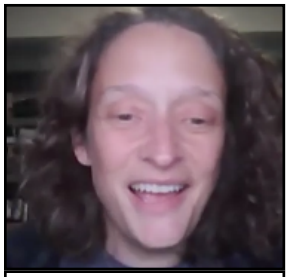
The minutes of the October meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported a balance of $117,474.46 in all of the chapter's accounts. Net income from the sale of break-open tickets for the current fiscal year, which began in March, is $12,954. The report was approved unanimously.

Longtime Chapter 1 members Dick Doyle (left) and Mark Truhan, the third president of the chapter, were present on Veterans Day when we updated the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial of those from Rutland County who served in the Vietnam War.

We began the meeting with a presentation by Jennie Gartner of Rutland. She is the community partnership coordinator for the southwest and central Vermont section of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. It is a private refugee resettlement organization that has existed for more than 100 years. It is one of nine refugee resettlement organizations in the U.S., two of which operate in Vermont. It voluntarily works with the U.S. government.

Jennie noted that as of today, there are 100 million forcibly displaced persons in the world, a number reflecting the recent surges of refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Venezuela. She explained that the U.S. president establishes quotas of refugees to be allowed into the country each year. Organizations like hers work with the U.S. State Department, letting it know how many refugees they are able to assist.



Jennie Gartner (screen shot from Zoom recording)

Almost 23 million of the refugees are designated by the United Nations as refugees, meaning they are legally allowed to apply to another country for refuge. Different laws apply to "refugees" than "asylum seekers" or "immigrants" in this country. She noted that the 1980 Refugee Resettlement Act was prompted considerably by the end of the Vietnam War.

Jennie said only one percent of refugees are offered resettlement in a third country. Most people winding up in refugee camps "will live and die" in refugee camps, she said, showing a slide of a massive camp in Egypt. "The goal of the United Nations high commissioner of refugees is to return people to the home from which they were forced," she said. If that cannot happen, the goal is to settle them in a third country.

Chapter 1 has a particular interest in Afghans who assisted the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan. They are designated "humanitarian parolees," another legal designation. Jennie's group helps this group, as well as those with other designations, such as "refugees" and "asylum seekers." Her group's main work is with refugees, but the Afghans have a special designation, also shared by people escaping the Ukraine war. The designation has a time limit. An interesting distinction in terminology is that someone given "refugee" status is allowed to stay here for life and begin the process to become citizens.

Humanitarian parolees only have a limited time to stay in the U.S., a period extended by President Biden from one year to two years for both Afghans and Ukranians.

Fortunately, the administration has created a process to speed up the processing of their documents. Other special designations for Afghans include a Special Immigrant Visa, which allows the person to stay and have access to benefits and services allowed other refugees. The Priority 2 program is yet another category for Afghans. Most of the Afghans Jennie has worked with in Rutland are eligible for SIV status. “Asylum” is generally the most indicated status for the Afghans, she said, but the process is “long and involved.” In some cases, human rights violations committed by the refugees can affect their bids for asylum.

Twelve Afghan men are in the area, two unmarried and the rest married with families back in Afghanistan. Jennie’s three-person team has been able to find everyone housing and jobs. The majority of what they earn is being sent home to their families. “Our guys are working 72 hours a week right now,” she said.

Jennie liked the idea of a meeting of the Afghans with veterans but noted the language barrier is a problem, though it can be addressed with translators. A few speak English, but most speak Dari and Pashto. “Our clients right now don’t have a lot of needs, in terms of financial needs,” she said. Assistance could be provided in terms of money sent home to Afghanistan, but a more locally confined option is providing gift cards, to grocery stores and Walmart, for example. Refugees get $1,200 in cash assistance when they arrive, as well as access to Medicaid services for one year. They are eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance until their earnings make them ineligible.

Andy Megrath asked what portion of assistance that Chapter 1 might provide would go to administration, as opposed to services to the refugees. Jennie said the staff salaries come from a pot of money that is separate from what the public might donate. The lawyer helping Vermont refugees is paid with a grant.

Michael Murphy asked how specifically Chapter 1 might help. Jennie put up a slide showing the range of services USCRI provides, ranging from cash assistance to youth mentoring and job counseling. For the most part, the purpose of the refugee resettlement process is to help refugees become self-sufficient within three months. There are about 160 Afghans in Vermont, but she expects more to arrive.

Later in the meeting, after Jennie had left the Zoom call, Jack Crowther made a motion to donate $1,000 to USCRI, with the understanding we would be receptive, if called on, for aid in the future. Following some discussion, we agreed that we will expect some accounting of how the money is spent.The motion was seconded by Michael Murphy. Passed unanimously.

Bill Ellwood asked if translators were available to assist if Chapter 1 members were to meet with the Afghans. Jennie said USCRI employs translators who could help with that. The Afghans are working actively on their English, she said.”I would be happy to facilitate whatever I can do that you think would be meaningful,” she said.

Moving on to other business, Andy Megrath introduced a request from Richard Gallo, a Vermont veterans outreach specialist, to assist a Vietnam veteran in Danby needing assistance for a car repair and a new stove. Richard has received some help from another sources but requested $1,000 for the car repair and $815 for a gas stove, plus delivery. Jack moved to donate $1,815, to be paid to the auto repair shop and the appliance store. Seconded by Michael Murphy. Passed unanimously.

Andy then brought up a request for assistance from a woman in Rutland, formerly of Danby, whose Vietnam veteran husband died in 2016 from cancer and whose son died in a logging accident in July. The son’s death left the woman with some $15,435 in funeral, burial and tombstone expenses, as the son had no life insurance or spouse. The woman said the expenses had depleted her savings, prompting the request for help. She is a good friend of Andy’s as was her her late husband, who is on the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Jack Crowther made a motion to donate $1,000, noting the assistance was somewhat “indirect,” i.e., not directly to a vet. After some discussion, Michael Murphy proposed raising that to $2,000, which was seconded by Tim Lonergan. Richard Reed cautioned we could be creating a “slippery slope,” in that we were not paying the money to a vendor but directly to the widow of a veteran. Normally the chapter has preferred to pay vendors, such as a fuel company or car repair shop, rather than directly to the person in need. After further discussion, we decided to offer to pay the woman’s rent up to $2,000. That further amendment was approved by Jack and seconded. Passed unanimously. (Following the meeting, we learned that the woman had expressed a wish that the money be paid to Holden Cemetery Maintenance, which was holding an unpaid bill for the tombstone. Expectation was that the money would be disbursed to Holden.)

Wrapping up the meeting, Tim Lonergan requested the chapter renew the $2,000 donation from last year to Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports for its programs directed to help veterans. Skiing, sailing and other sport activities are offered by the non-profit group, in which Tim is an active member. Jack Crowther moved the request be granted. Seconded by Richard Reed. Passed unanimously.

Richard Reed asked that the topic of refugee resettlement be continued at the next meeting. “I have experience with these folks in the past. I’m not having a problem with what we’re doing now, but again I think we need to proceed with caution . . .,” he said.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

THE NEXT CHAPTER 1 MEETING WILL BE BY ZOOM WEDNESDAY, JAN. 11, AT 5 P.M.

Here’s the link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85182304854?pwd=bFNGRzYrVEhPbUNTQWtNa1hwaXI2QT09

Meeting ID: 851 8230 4854

Passcode: 486678